

## Elmer, Linda

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**From:** Jeremy Ebersole <jebersole@milwaukeepreservation.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 03, 2020 12:57 PM  
**To:** Bauman, Robert; peltzsally@gmail.com; msbiz@att.net; mclendenen-acosta@kahlerslater.com; ann@pieperproperties.com; mjarosz@uwm.edu; Elmer, Linda; Owczarski, Jim; Historic Preservation Commission; Askin, Tim; Hatala, Carlen  
**Cc:** mpa@milwaukeepreservation.org  
**Subject:** HPC August 3, 2020 - Agenda Items 6 and 8

*The following comments were submitted regarding Agenda Item 6 on Friday, July 31, 2020 on behalf of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance. As there is no legislative file regarding this agenda item, we submit it here to be considered for Agenda Item 8 as well so it has the opportunity to be seen by Commission members and be included in the public record. Thank you.*

To the chair and honorable commissioners,

We are writing to address items 6 and 8 on the August 3, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission agenda (Discussion and possible adoption of mural guidelines).

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance recognizes the many layers of complexity involved in drafting new guidelines related to murals in historic districts. We recognize the important role art can play in adding vibrancy to our neighborhoods, including historic districts. Preservation should not be a tool to stop change in our community but to ensure that this change respects the uniqueness that the community already contains. There are certainly ways to add art, including murals, to historic resources that are compatible with both community character and community desires.

Guidelines for approval by the HPC are necessary to ensure fair and equitable application in decision-making. These guidelines should always be a result of a public process where the community that preservation regulations exist to serve has an opportunity to make their voices heard. As of the writing of this letter, two business days before the commission meeting, the draft guidelines are not yet available for review. As the only organization in the City of Milwaukee whose primary mission is to advocate for historic preservation, MPA is invested in commenting on the guidelines and supporting the Commission's important work. We are therefore troubled by the lack of adequate time under the current process and do not believe the guidelines should be considered without adequate time for public review and comment.

We have several questions, including: When and where will the draft guidelines be made available to the public? Do the complete guidelines merit a public hearing? If there is a public hearing and comments are heard, should the draft be returned to committee for possible revision? Will the guidelines need to be approved by the Common Council, or will the guidelines become a part of the Commission bylaws? Or, is there a third alternative?

Additionally, the question of murals on historic buildings or in historic districts is already complicated. Without a good understanding of the guidelines it is equally impossible for us to take an informed position regarding the COA under consideration. While we strongly support the message of voting rights and believe preservation can and should have a role to play in promoting equity, we believe the complex questions raised by the proposal deserve a thoughtful public process.

Respectfully submitted, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

**Jeremy T. Ebersole**  
(he/him/his)  
Executive Director